

**REMARKS**

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further clarify the definition of various aspects of the present invention. Specifically, Applicants have cancelled claim 26 without prejudice or disclaimer. Moreover, Applicants have amended claim 23 to recite that the step of applying a radio frequency bias voltage on the sample board is divided into plural steps, with the net power of the radio frequency power applied to the sample being reduced at least in the last step of these plural steps.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowance of claims 10, 12, 21, 22, 24 and 25, in the Office Action mailed April 4, 2006.

In light of canceling of claim 26 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 26 on prior art grounds, set forth in Item 4 on pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action mailed April 4, 2006, is moot.

The undersigned notes the rejection of claim 23 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112, set forth in Item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action mailed April 4, 2006; and the indication by the Examiner in the second paragraph of Item 5, on page 4 of the Office Action mailed April 4, 2006, that claim 23 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection of claim 23 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112. Claim 23 has been amended to recite that the step of applying a radio frequency bias voltage on the sample board is divided into plural steps; it is respectfully submitted that there is clear antecedent basis in claim 23 for this "step of applying a radio frequency bias voltage on said sample board" (note the third listed step in claim 23). Moreover, note that claim 23 as presently amended omits the recitation said "processing step"; and, accordingly, it is respectfully

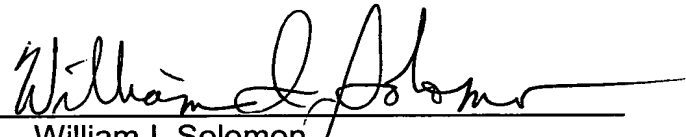
submitted that the basis for rejection of claim 23, set forth in Item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action mailed April 4, 2006, is moot.

In view of the foregoing comments and amendments, reconsideration and allowance of all claims presently in the application are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Applicants request any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including any extension of time fees, be charged to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, No. 01-2135 (case 520.38979CX1), and credit any excess payment of fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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